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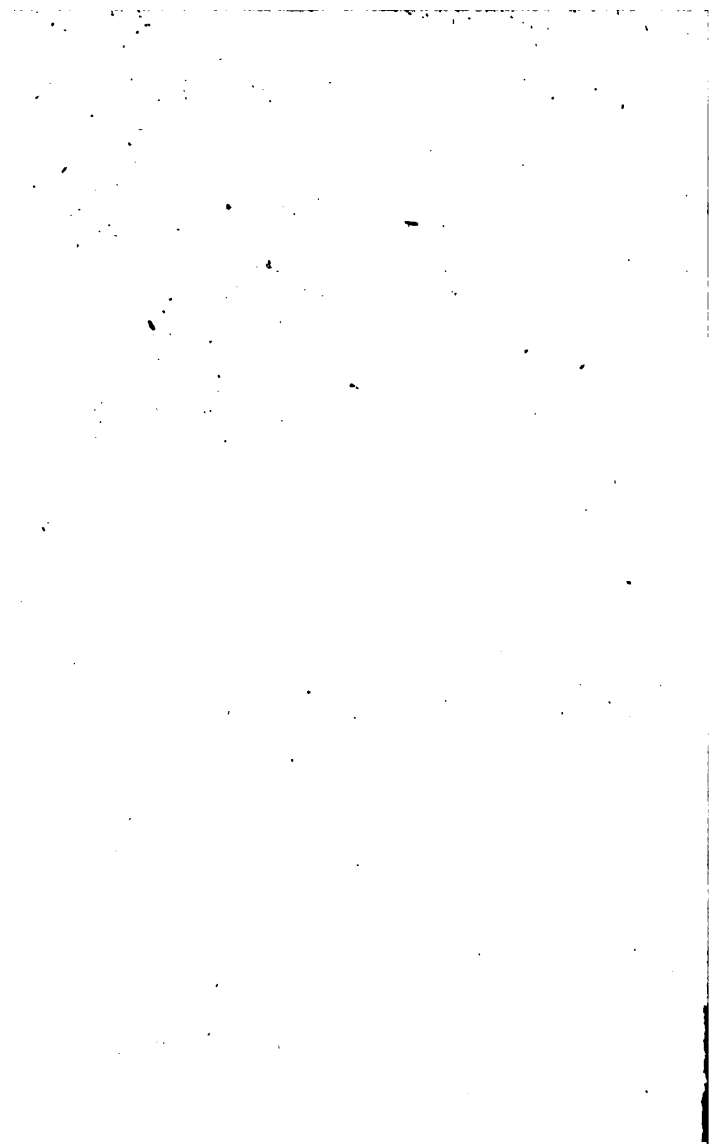


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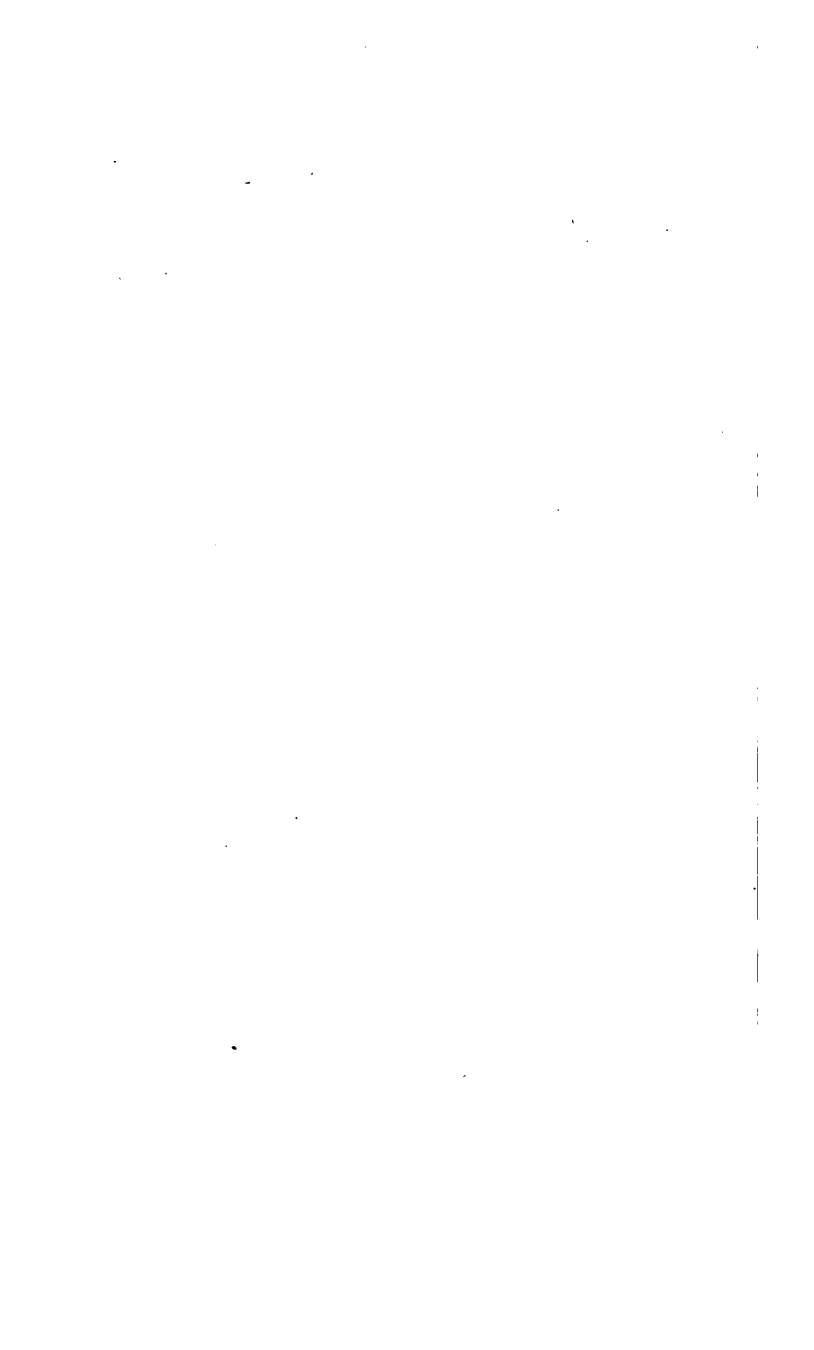
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## **HINTS TO SPORTSMEN.**





- 36

# H I N T S

TO

GROWN SPORTSMEN.



LONDON:

J. HATCHARD & SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

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1832.

284.

**LONDON :**

**ISOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.**

# G U N S.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Agilis.* It has been said, that whatever it is worth while to do at all, it is worth while to do well; and I suppose that is the reason why I see you so very particular with that old gun, which, if I mistake not, is the same our mutual friend Dilator said you had given fifty guineas for.

*Peritus.* The very same. But now let me ask in return, why you call it an old gun, and what I am to understand by your mentioning the sum given for it with that expression which accompanies your query?

*Agilis.* Why, to tell you the truth, I have

so long been in the habit of changing my implements after a season or two, that I can hardly conceive a gun which has been used so long to be safe. As to the price, I confess I do not see why this which I hold in my hand, and which cost but little more than half the sum when new, is not quite as good.

*Peritus.* If you mean to make the assertion and abandon it, I have nothing to say ; but if you choose to discuss the matter fairly, our mutual friend Dilator, shall have my reasons for differing from you, and we shall, if you please, make him umpire.

*Agilis.* I shall be glad to have your experience.

*Peritus.* Well then, in the first place, I have no idea of hazarding my life, risking my sport, and losing my patience, to save a sum, which a little additional care will equally well spare me. You are not, however, to suppose, that because I pay a sum which is double that which you recommend, I necessarily conceive myself in possession of

an instrument which will do twice as much, last twice as long, and keep in order double the time—this is by no means the case; and if I obtain one half of the amount of each of these advantages, I shall be fully satisfied. But to begin, look at the barrels of these two guns; perhaps you see no difference.

*Agilis.* I really can't say I do—I think mine looks quite as well.

*Peritus.* Take out the nipples—do you see any now?

*Agilis.* No, I do not.

*Peritus.* Then I must tell you that the letting in of those two little tubes cost the workmen twice the labour that yours did. In the first place you will remark, that after fixing but two of the threads of the screw, the nipple will not wobble from side to side; in yours it will.

*Agilis.* This is a mere chance; look at Dilator's gun, his are as tight as your own.

*Peritus.* Perhaps so; but I pay to exclude chance from having any thing to do with my

gun; he is a clumsy workman, and I sometimes meet him when I least wish it. But to proceed. The nipples in your gun neither sit fast to the sides nor at the base; in Dilator's gun they do at the sides but not at the base, and the consequence is, that in time the powder will work behind the threads of the nipple, and injure both it and the breech, and perhaps blow out the former in your face. I shall pass over the shooting of the barrel, as this is a matter, singular as it may appear, in which the difference between first-rate and inferior makers is *least perceptible*, the even propulsion of the shot depending more upon the metal of the barrel than any other cause; and in this respect there is less difference in the material of the barrel of a good maker and another, than would be supposed—I say less difference as far as shooting is concerned, as this part of the theory of gunnery is ill understood, and thus the barrels of a country maker will occasionally perform in an extraordinary way, whilst the ave-

rage is not in their favour. As far as safety is worth consideration, however, much may be said. Observe Dilator's barrel: his gun appears very strong, but in reality it is not so. Take this pair of callipers and measure; you find great thickness at the muzzle—six inches further down infinitely less, while the first six inches of the barrel nearest the breech are of an even thickness. Look at mine: comparatively it has less metal, yet weigh the two barrels and balance the two guns, and then try; the stress upon a detonating gun lying in a different part to that which it does in a flint, you will observe that its greatest thickness is at the breech, and that it gradually tapers; and I will be bound to say that you could not remove a particle of metal from this barrel without destroying the balance of the strength required to resist the charge; yet I do not, like Dilator, carry an ounce more than is exactly necessary, nor, like you, render it a probable occurrence, that by a little carelessness on your part, and

idleness on that of our friend's keeper, you will meet with an accident before the turn of the season. And on the supposition that an accident of a serious nature does occur, there is certainly more probability that a barrel less carefully welded and forged from inferior metal would fly instead of merely opening, than a more expensively wrought material; I do not, however, mean to say such occurrences are likely, but that the *possibility* is increased. I remember perfectly well borrowing a gun which looked well, and upon loading it with a proper charge, each lock was blown off as discharged, with somewhat a narrow escape to my face from the left one; and upon examination I found that the touch-holes were merely thin sheets of platina, let into a single groove, and smoothed off outside. But let us continue our examination. Do you see any comparison between the soft piece of wood which that stock you have in your hand is composed of, and the clean-cut, hard material which Dilator is examining? Depend upon



it that half-a-dozen years' wear will make some little difference even in that, as to letting in the rain more easily and leaving the iron work more loose; but the great difference exists in the nipples, the way they are let in, the trigger, trigger-plates, and locks; the former of these are not bored sufficiently conical, and the powder will sooner make them foul; the temper is not so good, and consequently, by wearing, (for the locks are liable to the same objection,) they will be less likely to ignite the priming properly; a great part of which, I observe, seems already, from faulty construction, to find its way into the locks; the purchases of the locks are not correctly adjusted, the wear and tear is therefore greater, and the whole movements of the lock not being properly tempered, will so cut each other that the relative positions of each will alter, and the locks become rickety; you will then be in possession of a gun you do not like, and if you part with it, can obtain nothing for it. This is on the score of economy. In

general it may be said also, that the guns of first-rate makers handle better, balance better. All the weight that is carried tells in one way or another, and the materials being the best to be obtained, they not only wear long, but wear out together.

*Agilis.* Your arguments are very fair, but your own gun appears pretty much worn.

*Peritus.* Well, it may be; I have used it now ten years, and I believe there is not a head of game in the country it has not brought down; but if you examine it, you will find that the locks and barrels are as good as if they had been made yesterday, though it must be confessed that the stock has a tolerably antiquated appearance; but I can answer for the safety of the gun, and I doubt not, if you were to examine the breech-screw, as well as the sockets for the nipples, that you would find them perfect—they were so, at any rate, six weeks ago.

*Agilis.* I should hardly like to pay the attention you do to any thing, but probably,

as I know there is much difference of opinion upon these subjects, your charge has been very small.

*Peritus.* I have but one answer to make to the first observation, which is, that I always find the way to create trouble is to seek too much to avoid it. The keeper cleans my gun as he has done yours; I merely see that this is done immediately after use, and overlook his work when finished. This is the work of a moment, and all that is required is to wipe the inside and outside of the barrels with an oiled rag, when he has not paid his wonted attention to them; and the same with the locks; and as for the charge, I conceive it to be a matter of little importance whether I use a large charge or a small one, in the matter of safety, as it is from corrosion I anticipate the greatest danger. But here is my horn—what do you think of it? You will observe the charge marked on the top at each notch.

*Agilis.* Three drachms and a quarter. You do not use that charge.

*Peritus.* Indeed but I do; and I find it exactly what I wish to propel an ounce and a half of shot; that is a drachm of powder to each half ounce of shot, and a trifle over, which in measure is about equal quantities of each. I consider this the best proportion; it is true, guns differ in this matter, but as an average I think this rule is the best, though powder differs so greatly that a standing rule can scarcely be given.

*Agilis.* You seem very decided as to your opinion of the relative value between London-made guns, and those at a much less price manufactured in the country. In what qualities do you suppose the advantages to consist, and how do you prove these qualities may not exist as well in a country as a London-made gun? Pray state your opinion at length. I have never heard the matter fully discussed, though I have certainly seen much confidence shown by the advocates of each.

*Peritus.* The value is derived from four causes; goodness of raw material, temper,

close fitting, and adaptation of the several parts to each other, in shape, position, and substance, as fittest to fulfil the duties for which they are separately and collectively intended in the production or convenience, permanence, and effect.

Let us consider this in the same light in which we should view any other branch of merchandise; first, it must be conceded, that wherever the best maker may be, there the highest quality of produce will be found; it is *likely*, therefore, that the material offered to the London maker will be superior to that brought for sale, to the comparatively small consumer (in price if not in quantity) in the country; the well-known competition existing between all London makers, renders it probable, that he will use his utmost exertions to secure this advantage in the highest degree. Secondly: with regard to temper there are two things to be considered, namely, the degree of hardness required to prevent a movement from wearing itself away; and

next, with reference to its action upon other parts in contact with it, as in some machines we have wheels bushed with brass to diminish friction. Great tact is requisite in this matter, first, to know the temper required; secondly, to give it. The workman who can effect this, is valuable in proportion to his knowledge; is he likely to remain in the country at low wages, or to become the servant of the highest bidder? Close-fitting: an accurate eye and practised hand are absolutely necessary to effect this, which is a main cause of permanence in a gun-lock, as thereby all parts bear their even proportion of stress, and (the temper and position of all parts being correct) an even wear is the result. But the most practised workman requires an extension of time, in some degree proportionate to the goodness of his work, comparing it with that of others less skilful, and this adds to the price: the London maker can best afford to pay that price.

Lastly, the fitness of the parts for the

duties they have to fulfil. It may be said here, that the greater the quantity of material manufactured, the greater degree of knowledge must be attained by the manufacturer. Assuming then that the superiority of material is shown, we have to prove that the cheap manufacturer either cannot, by quantity, obtain such a knowledge of the requisite shape of the parts of a gun, as, when put together, shall make it equal to that of a London-maker; or if in possession of that knowledge, cannot, in the same degree, avail himself of it. Supposing, then, that he does take the pattern of the most approved shape for his guide, (a circumstance we find not to be commonly the case,) or even in the absence of equal opportunities of comparison, that great spur to improvement, can invent a better shape than others, this can only refer to the handling of the gun; its working, as before shown, depending so much upon material, temper, and putting together, that it possesses the form of goodness only, without

the reality ; and as well might you expect to procure an article of dress equally convenient, lasting, and fitting, of a country tailor, as that which may be had of a first-rate workman in London, as procure an article of the nature of a gun of the same degree of excellence in the country as in town.

*Agilis.* Have you not omitted the consideration, that all workmen can work cheaper in the country, from the diminished price of food and house-rent, than in large towns ; as also the enormous profits made by London gun-makers?

*Peritus.* The advantage you here mention, does not come into play—it is a matter of consideration for the workman alone. I would admit it, did I consider that the workman himself was ill-paid, but the contrary is the fact. It has already been conceded, that although a gun progresses in value as it progresses in price, yet not in an equal ratio, and part of the difference consists in the greater (I might almost say undue) pay, in



proportion to his labour, which a first-rate workman can procure ; and secondly, in the great credit which any one maker may obtain over others from the known excellence of his work : these latter are two little monopolies, and must be paid for while they exist ; but it is your business to fix a limit upon this by selecting from the best makers, and procuring the most for your money ; and you may be certain, that although large manufactories can be carried on with greater advantage in the country, in circumstances where moderate ability is required, and many hands used, and machinery can also be called into play upon the same terms, yet superior manual dexterity will always overcome the difference of dearness of living and present itself where there is and ever must be the greatest mart, and most continued as well as highest bidders for it ; to wit, in that place where the manufacture to be produced is in the highest credit and perfection. And as these two will, therefore, continue to operate

upon each other, the demand for guns and the perfection of their manufacture, will draw the best workmen, and they will again produce the most perfect guns: and London will thus continue the best mart for the buyer as well as the seller, until some other city spring up, where the purchasers of the article become more numerous and the talents of the workmen more appreciated.

But you will say that other articles of trade, though sold (as guns) in London, are yet manufactured in other places where they have localized their credit, as Norwich shawls, &c. Why not guns at Birmingham? The answer is, that a shawl will fit any one; but the article we treat of must be made to suit the purchaser individually, and its repairs, &c. &c. render a personal communication between the seller and the buyer desirable, if not necessary. This has, in the first instance, localized the trade, and the comparative opulence of the city will support or diminish the eminence of it, as itself may increase or de-

cline. But as to enormous profits : that any body of men can have the power of a continued monopoly where the ground is open to competition, is a supposition you will not expect me to combat. I assume, therefore, that the price asked for guns by such makers as Lancaster, Moore, Nock, Purdey, and Smith, (I mention these alphabetically,) are no greater than they have, on fair terms of merchandize, a right to ask; or if you think any of these may have attained a credit which enables them to ask a fancy price, the remark cannot at any rate apply to all. I have, in my observations, somewhat mixed up the proof of the fact of superiority in London workmanship with what I conceive to be the causes of it; but as it is by laying these before you that I expect to convince, I must beg your excuse for the medley.

*Agilis.* I believe Dilator and myself must be content to take a lesson; will you have us for pupils, and during our walks, in the

matters in which we are at present likely to be engaged, afford us your thoughts upon all subjects connected with our to-day's conversation?

*Peritus.* Cheerfully; but I must alter the time a little, or you will not have an opportunity to put my assertions to the test; nor will my memory serve me to mention all I otherwise might; but do you and Dilator join me in a fortnight, and we will then discuss these topics. And if you bring your dogs with you I shall have a better opportunity of judging how far I may go, lest I get into the scrape of giving lessons to my masters; for the gun itself is so little understood, and so much less made of it than might be, that it is no uncommon thing to find the oldest sportsmen ignorant upon that subject, though expert upon others.

*Agilis.* Adieu! we will not fail you.

## CHAPTER II.

*Peritus.* Good morning; you seem nobly appointed, but I had hoped to have seen you earlier.

*Dilator.* Why, the truth was, Agilis had forgotten his powder-horn, or rather taken the wrong one in his hurry; and as we started in the dark, having so far to come, some time elapsed before we could find it. We have, however, made up our time nearly, by the the pace we have travelled.

*Peritus.* So I see by the dogs.

*Agilis.* You will not find them give up, though they have been a little pressed: but

you were evidently about to say something ; remember we have surrendered our characters to you, and are at present but scholars.

*Peritus* Well, then, I was about to observe, that if Agilis had laid all the articles upon his table overnight, which he intended to use in the morning, this hurry would have been avoided ; for, to tell you the truth, though we have liberty to shoot on this ground to-day, yet we divide it with a friend, whose motions are rather quick, and I would fain have known which beat he meant to take, lest we cross—but no matter.

The dogs are standing, do you go up to them ; you know I am not here as a shooter ; three in a party are dangerous, besides being too many for sport.

*Agilis.* The birds are gone ; what do you think would be the difference, as to quantity, between two persons and one.

*Peritus.* This must materially depend upon the steadiness of the parties : if unpractised they would be in each others way, and

the produce of the two guns less than that of one ; but if, on the contrary, used to each other's society, and seeking only such shots as rightly belong to them, I conceive there is great advantage in every way. In the first place, only one beat is disturbed instead of two ; in the second, provided their pace and style of beating accords, the difference between going out alone and in company need not be commented upon, for I do not think that above one-third less would fall to each gun than if the parties had gone out singly. If the birds lie singly, perhaps there may be a variation against this, and if in covies, in favour ; but I think this may be taken as a fair average. But look again—go up to the bitch : her nose, though not so fine as the dog's, is more certain. Why, Agilis, you have shot your first bird to pieces, and the second will surely get into the wood before he falls. You mistook your birds ; the first bird you fired at was the nearest of the whole covey, and the last rather a long shot. This should have been reversed, at

any rate by you, who take down your gun and cock it for the second shot—a habit I cannot help thinking more safe, though not so productive, as cocking both at once. It will not be amiss, however, to recollect this rule:—let your first barrel be placed upon any bird on your own side, that is within a fair distance, reserving a near bird for the second shot. Dilator shoots with both barrels cocked, and cannot therefore with the same ease accommodate himself to this habit, nor is it so necessary to him. But the dogs are not looking for your bird, which I think should be found; this is his line, the gate, the tall thorn in the fence, and this ash-tree: remember this rule, never to stir from the place where you may be standing until you have marked the *precise spot* on which your game falls. There are more birds lost by *too great surety, and want of exact marking*, than in any other way. See, the bitch has it! observe the difference which tuition, as well as natural abilities, has



produced. You see she has anticipated what was expected of her, and watched the bird in its flight and fall. But let me look at your charge; this is too small for that gun, or otherwise it has not done its duty. Now observe the difference: take my gun for the next shot;—do you observe how that bird falls?

*Agilis.* I do; its wings shut to its sides, and its death is instantaneous. The distance, too; this must be a most extraordinary gun, if such be its usual range.

*Peritus.* It is not extraordinary, though it is good; but the difference you observe lies not so much between our different instruments, as in the manner in which they are used. You have got, for all I know, a good gun; you have put the usual load in it; you have bought your powder at your usual shop, and kept it in the usual place. Now, I am bold to say, first, that two drachms and a quarter of powder is too small a charge for it; secondly, that one ounce and a half of shot

persuaded that so much depends upon this, I always have my powder packed in half-pounds, a spare one of which I usually carry about me, and never open it until my horn is empty; and I am certain that more depends upon the quality and state of the powder than is usually ascribed to it. I mean, as to the manner in which the birds fall, and the distance, to say nothing about dirtying the gun and delaying the ignition. I have frequently taken two different horns out with me, and found this to be the case, and often throw away the remainder of a pound, after using a charge or two; indeed, I am informed that the best powder cannot even be made in certain states of the atmosphere. The great faults to be avoided are, the production of too much damp, the deposition of too much charcoal, slowness in ignition, and want of projectile force; thus one drachm of powder of one maker is not equal to the same quantity of that of another; and hence, confusing bulk with strength, *particularly in*

*rifle* shooting, many mistakes arise. Rely upon it, if you pay attention to the quality and state of your powder, you will find yourself better repaid than by twice the attention to almost any of your other appointments. I have great objection to quote names, as it is invidious to those left out, but I cannot resist the temptation of telling you, that of all the powder I ever used, I prefer, by far, that of John Hall, of Dartford, usually called glass powder, and I leave your trial of it to corroborate or nullify my assertion. But how now, *Agilis*, you have missed half, nay more than half, the birds you have fired at within shot this morning; and yet you tell me that your gun is so very good;—did you mean for a first-rate, or a moderate shot?

*Agilis*. I cannot conceive how my shooting can effect the character of the gun.

*Peritus*. Indeed! well, then, in our friend Dilator's hand I should say that it were more at home than in your's, and I will venture to say, from the great nervous irritation

under which you fire, that his gun would suit you two to one the best. You find it so ; both these birds were killed. Now have you any idea of the reason ?

*Agilis.* I suppose because it scatters more.

*Peritus.* Precisely so ; when *you pull the trigger*, your aim (which is rarely, in your extreme hurry, correctly placed upon the bird) falls behind, your gun drops at the same instant, and thus you both shoot behind and below, and the few shots which strike are void of force, **being those** which would be lost at a **long distance**, and you only wound the game you shoot at. Look at that partridge—do you observe ? it is not the goodness of the gun which has caused the bird to fall in that manner ; but Dilator is particularly steady to-day, his powder is good, and the bird has received the centre shot of the charge, whereas the two you killed were only struck by the edge of the circle ; you will, however, continue to improve by continuing to hit, and may then

retake the gun which you now hold. As it is, I recommend your offering Dilator to exchange with you ; which I am sure he will do ; as your gun, which carries closer and further, suits him best.

*Agilis.* I believe you are right ; but I can hardly make up my mind to give up so incomparable an instrument for one that will not kill more than two-thirds the distance ; nor can I well understand what you mean by the gun dipping.

*Peritus.* That is as much as to say, that if you were confined to the use of a bow and arrow, you would prefer one so powerful you could not use it, because, if properly handled, it would carry twice as far as another which suited your strength ; this is a very common mistake, but let me tell you, even to the best shots, a close carrying gun has some disadvantages ; you frequently lose in time what is gained in distance ; and an evenly scattering gun will do more in confined places and

wood shooting than another, and where the aim cannot, for want of time, be so exact, and the charge of shot be interfered with by the bushes and stumps which frequently intervene between the game when followed by the gun, and shot at when not seen. A gun of this sort is more efficacious by far, than if it carried its shot like a ball; nor does it destroy where the distance is small. But you ask what I mean by dipping. I mean that fall of the gun which in young and anxious shots takes place, more or less, and is most observable when the gun misses fire; it is this circumstance that renders it desirable to have the longest possible stock to a rifle, where the butt is not likely to interfere with the shot, by striking the shoulder in rising; and by a parity of reasoning, you will find, that if there be a choice in the two barrels of a gun, you will find that the left will kill running, and the right flying shots the best; because the left trigger being considerably nearer the shoulder, it admits of the arm

being more bent, and the gun falling more easily—the converse being applicable to birds. These may appear to you to be niceties, but you will find them useful.

*Dilator.* I think I see a duck on that pond. allow me to try my hand with your gun.

*Peritus.* There are two—*Agilis* will go with you.

*Agilis.* How is this? my shot covered the bird all over, and it is gone away, while *Dilator's* bird, at a little longer distance, is killed? Here I have lost by the exchange of guns.

*Peritus.* I rather think you have mistaken the cause of *Dilator's* success; if I err not, you will find his bird struck in the head. See, here is the shot—I will explain this to you. *Dilator* fired the moment the bird rose from the water, in doing which he was obliged to raise himself upright; his head was then undefended, and he fell. On the contrary, yours was actually upon the wing, and as he was going straight away, no vital part was

sufficiently exposed at so long a distance to secure you the bird. You will find this a valuable secret late in the season, when the birds are plenty, but very wild; and if you shoot as the bird tops the stubble, from the spring of the leg rather than the clip of the wing, the advantage will soon be evident; but this hint will perhaps be more useful to Dilator than to you, at present. But see, it begins to rain; let us cover our guns, and sit here till it be over. You wonder at my precaution—in fact it is to me the least trouble to defend my barrels from wet; not that I shall be so very scrupulous if the rain comes on heavy, but that as I always go over my gun myself when cleaned, I shall have less to do if it be not much drenched. And here I cannot help observing, that there is no more troublesome mode of managing, to my mind, than by leaving to others that surveillance which should be undertaken by oneself; and I would no more think of putting away my gun in an unneat state, either at the end of



a day or that of a season, and my appointments in confusion, than I would of putting up a horse unfed or linen unwashed.—But see, it holds up, let us start.

*Dilator.* In one moment. I will just have my shot chargers filled, and be off.

*Peritus.* You must allow me the liberty of a master to tell you this should have been done before, while the rest of the party, who are not so idle as to carry charges, were sitting down; you are now detaining them for a convenience to you, which convenience they would never dream of purchasing at the same price for themselves.

*Dilator.* I beg pardon indeed—I hardly observed the way in which either Agilis or you carried your shot. Pray let me see it.

*Peritus.* I cannot undertake to say which mode is the best. Agilis has his in a bag with a spring top, which at once lets out the charge, and saves his time; but then if he has much weight to carry, it is greatly in his way: whereas mine goes in a belt round my

waist, and being *much* broader than usual, sits flat, and consequently does not cut. You will observe also, that the end of my shot-belt is graduated, so as to enable me to lengthen it when I use larger shot; and the quantities are also marked in different parts of the belt, so that I may be enabled to take out exactly the number of shot I am likely to have. I find this very convenient in wild shooting, and walking, especially alone; but in cover shooting, where the shots are very quick, and a fresh supply of shot at hand, Agilis's plan is undoubtedly the readiest. You are looking at the little hole through the top of the charger. I saw the string was wanting to connect it with the belt and prevent the possibility of its being lost; but I neglected to put in a new one last night, and this morning it was forgotten.

*Dilator.* I think, Peritus, you must have been originally descended from the American Indians—you seem to delight in being your own servant.

*Peritus.* Doubtless, the more civilised we are, the more dependent we become upon each other ; and where affection is concerned, perhaps no feeling is more delightful. But in the mere matter of animal convenience, the degree of liberty to be sacrificed when independence is relinquished, can never find an equivalent. As far as your person is concerned, at any rate, let me recommend you never to let others do for you that which, with a saving of time, you can do for yourself ; for even if the restraint it produces should not be felt by yourself, it will frequently intrude upon the time and patience of your friends. I remember hearing of a young man who, calling upon his associate, was surprised to find him in bed. “ How is this ? ” said he. “ Why,” replied the other, in anger, “ my servant has chosen to get drunk, and here am I left till he pleases to make his appearance.” Rely upon it, helplessness will come on without courting. But see, there is my friend Amicus. How do you do ? what sport have you had ?

*Amicus.* Indifferent. We had but one dog, and my friend met with the double accident of breaking the stock of his gun, and losing a most valuable setter. We are going back to-morrow morning, and shall return in a week hence : it is extremely unfortunate, as there is no gunsmith here who can even cobble my friend's gun.

*Peritus.* You have indeed been unlucky. May I ask you how the dog was lost ?

*Amicus.* We are close to the village where we put up. It is against rule to go into a house for refreshment if it can be helped ; but perhaps you can advise us, and it is but a step. Here we are—look, there are the “ scattered arms and ensigns.” Poor Marquis was hanged on his way by the coach ; he fell over behind while my friend's servant was telling one of his best stories, I suppose ; and here is the gun—the stock, you see, is broken almost short in the middle.

*Peritus.* I cannot but think travelling dogs under such circumstances rather dangerous ;

as many dogs are hanged in this way, if possible, as are spoiled by following, slow, wet, and cold, behind waggons. The preferable way is to pack them in large hampers, if to travel alone; and if under charge, to pass a rope behind the shoulders, and tie it loosely to the collar above, so that if they fall they shall support their weight by the shoulders instead of by the neck. Poor Marquis is gone irremediably; but if you will undertake to show *my* friends the bounds, I will soon put *your* friend's instrument in a sound state.

*Amicus.* Why *you* seem to have suffered, for I observe the top of your shot-belt is gone.

*Peritus.* Indeed this is the punishment of delay; but I had it when you and I were talking; it has jerked out since, and will easily be found. Suppose I undertake the stock, and leave you to form two parties and go on. I shall lose little, for my day was devoted to instruction rather than to

sport, and I think my pupils must already be tired.

*Agilis.* This is by no means the case; but I prefer staying to learn how to mend a stock. I was once obliged to leave the friend at whose house I was staying for this reason, and I doubt how you, who talk about safety, can reconcile this to your own creed.

*Peritus.* Indeed! See then, I first put a little glue between the fractured parts, and then tie them strongly round. Hand me that gimlet. Now we have a hole right through, at right angles with the grasp;—dip that peg in glue, and hand it over to me,—so now we have it driven tight in. I let loose the string at one end, and begin to bind the stock with this waxed thread, leaving the glue that has oozed from the sides of the wood to lay hold of the thread—so now it is finished off like a cricket-bat. Let us borrow a small strip of ribbon of the hostess, to bind over and prevent our friend's hand from being stuck to the stock. Enough; I will venture to say

that the bandage would remain firm much longer than it will be left there; and though the grasp of the gun is a little thicker, it will not much matter, and it is but a make-shift after all.

## CHAPTER III.

*Peritus.* Well, what sport have you met with?

*Amicus.* Why, in truth, we should have had a good afternoon, but I think we pressed our bad luck too far, and continued to beat some ground which we had for the last hour before found very deficient in birds; while, at the same time, we did not make enough of the ground upon which we started. We flushed three good covies at setting off, and thinking the whole of the country abounded in game, we did not make by any means the most of them. Do you remember a capital



day's sport we had once in Essex, and, laying ourselves out for a large supply, the next day got absolutely nothing?

*Peritus.* Indeed I do; and I make it a rule, whenever I find game plenty, or whatever game I find, not to leave it for an uncertainty, but to beat the ground thoroughly, as long as I can find a bird. It is an old saying—"Find birds in the hills, and kill them in the vallies;" but I think our experience, Amicus, would tell us, that as there is no certainty as to where game may be found, a favourite spot (I mean as to the evident resort of that day) cannot be too well beaten; first, because a bird that lies is worth a covey that are wild: and secondly, because each time a bird is flushed, there is less chance he will ever be bagged—and this is one reason why there is so strong an objection to beating a country too often. I confess, however, that I frequently err in giving up a little too soon, when I have been beating some time and found nothing;

yet it rarely occurs that much sport is to be had when the birds seem to have chosen another position for the day.

*Amicus.* I quite agree with you, and when, after running my dogs over a tract of country, they begin to relax and I to grow tired, I much prefer changing my beat to wearying the dogs out; and carrying ill luck as far as it will go, is not, I think, wise. Indeed, when offered a day's shooting where I think the game is unevenly sprinkled, I invariably choose the best plot I can find first, and by driving the game about, I secure some sport in the first instance, and am enabled, with good hope of success, to beat the neighbouring ground, which otherwise would not have been worth the venture. I remember, in my boyish days, having frequently kept a little spot to the last, and after driving the few pheasants that it contained abroad, was obliged to commence my labours over again, and rebeat a country I was already tired of, and had tried all the morning in vain.

*Peritus.* You are right, my friend : always keep to that which is good, and always begin with it when you can ; your dogs too will hunt much longer if the first half of the day be successful and the last empty, than if you reverse the matter. But we have not dined, and as we are to be up early to-morrow, I must have one look at my gun, which got very wet at one time to-day. No, I believe it is quite unhurt, and after rubbing it with this oiled rag over the locks and these edges, I believe I have nothing else to do.

*Agilis.* I see my locks are in a terrible state Will you show me the best way to take them in pieces ?

*Peritus.* Place your lock on full cock, screw on the cramp, let down the cock, and the main-spring will fall off ; replacing it when necessary, by letting down the cock, hooking the spring, full cocking, and then removing the cramp. I need not detail the modes of taking to pieces the whole of the lock ; but I may remind you, that in sepa-

rating the cock from the tumbler, the turn-screw should on no account be placed between the cock and the lock-plate, but a small blow should be struck on the end of the tumbler, which may protrude through the cock, or if level with it, the end of a turnscrew may be placed upon it, and the other end struck as a punch ; while the plate of the lock itself, disencumbered of course of all the other movements, is held in the palm of the left hand, the turnscrew being held in its place by the finger and thumb of the same hand. In inserting the scear, it is well to remember that this is to be done after re-fixing the feather spring, by hooking the end in the tumbler before the re-adjustment of the main-spring, and pressing back the other end by force till the screw is put in its place. This, I confess, is somewhat more difficult than half securing the bridle, and putting on the feather spring last by pushing it into its place when the screw is through it, though not tight ; but I like the first-mentioned of these ways

the best. But what oil is it you are using?—your gun appears extremely dirty. Let me recommend you to clarify the oil you use for the purpose of lubricating the locks, by filling the bottle with shot, drawing off the clear oil, and repeating the process again and again at your leisure. See, here is some I have had eleven years, and you will observe it is free from that cloudy deposit which oil not thus or otherwise clarified, contains, and which is apt to leave a black stain behind it. But we are to be up early—so good night.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Amicus.* My friend has cut his foot so much by yesterday's walking, that I believe he will find his way back to day, for he can hardly bear it to be touched.

*Peritus.* Indeed ! this is unfortunate. You will find the never-failing diachylon in my room, not upon linen, but cotton, which will adapt itself to the foot and adhere much longer. I think your friend has been using thin angola stockings, instead of the thickest worsted. However, we can find you a substitute. What say you, Dilator—will you take a lesson from my old friend, who,

I assure you, you will find able to give you some serviceable hints.

*Dilator.* Indeed I have so long considered that shooting consisted merely in holding my gun straight, that I shall be delighted to learn how ignorant I have been.

*Peritus.* Let us start then Amicus : and you take the large cover, and try the high grass with the setters ; and Agilis and I will take the open country, and meet you, at two, near the river, and we will then divide again as convenient.

*Dilator.* Is not that a duck I see upon the river ? How I regret that I have No. 7 in the gun ; I have hardly a chance of getting near enough for this to tell.

*Amicus.* I know this country pretty well, and thought it likely we might meet some wild fowl. Here is a charge or two of fours at your disposal ; but you must draw your charge quickly, and get out of sight.

*Dilator.* How unfortunate ! the top of my ramrod will not come off, even with the turnscrew.

*Amicus.* Stay a moment; take mine, yours can be put to rights when we get home.

*Dilator.* Alas! alas! seven ducks, and all gone! I am certain they did not see me, and as for hearing on the grass, it is impossible. By what gift could they ascertain their danger? I am half inclined to believe they smelt the powder.

*Amicus.* There is more truth in what you have just said than you think: though the ducks did not smell the powder, they did you; and you may rely upon it that, with the wind this way, you had very little chance of getting a shot. Most animals have the sense of smelling and hearing very acute, and (not that I recommend it) you will find it easier to get shot by waiting for wild fowl to light near you, than by stalking them. But come, let us set your ramrod to rights at once. Observe this string—I first make a slip-knot which I pull tight round the top of the ramrod—that is, the cap of the screw,—



and then twist the string round and round, leaving the end out; and now I twist this piece the contrary way round the other half of the brass point. I now affix my knife to one, and my dog-whip to the other, for levers, and wet the string in the water here, to make it adhere.

*Dilator.* The string slips round and round; surely it never can hold.

*Amicus.* Wait one moment. The first few turns never hold; but now, see the screw moves, and a little oil put upon the threads will make it easy. You will find this mode of obtaining a purchase very useful where a vice cannot be used; and the adhesion of the string to the substance it is twisted round is extraordinary. But we must go on, we are losing time.—How did you miss that bird?

*Dilator.* Nothing so easy; it flew directly over my head—a shot I rarely ever kill.

*Amicus.* In my opinion, no shot is so certain. Try the effect of getting your aim upon the next bird in that position, and then suddenly bring-

ing the point of your gun a little more over your head, endeavour, as it were, to fire an inch or two before the bird. You will rarely miss in this position, and in these cases you have always time ; but by waiting, as you did, till the bird had passed, and then firing after it, you not only lost the effect produced by the bird meeting the shot, and thus adding to its force, but gave away the chance of a second barrel. And here permit me to make an observation upon your shooting to-day. You have refused several cramped shots because you had little time, and fired several long ones which were almost out of distance. The pied pheasant you fired at was wounded, and in all probability will never be seen again. This is not the most advantageous mode of filling a bag ; the difficult shots are likely enough to be missed, but if hit, they are bagged. Besides it improves your quickness extremely, to be in the habit of using your gun freely ; whereas few people like to see every head of game on their estate fired at

either in or out of distance, and, setting aside the cruelty, the game is wasted by this proceeding. But as to the effect of expecting to bag every bird you shoot at, and picking your shots, I have only to call to your mind how you have shot the next day after evening shooting, as a youth at rabbits and wood pigeons, when you have expected sitting shots, has it not made you as slow and hesitating as possible? Thus rifle shooting has the same effect, though it certainly gives a degree of steadiness which the former does not.

*Dilator.* Will you sit down for a moment? I am so overpowered with the heat and this stiff shooting-jacket, that I am quite distressed. How difficult it is to judge how the day will turn out!

*Amicus.* You were late in getting ready in the morning, and have been endeavouring to make up for it by hurry ever since. Your speed is misplaced, and will be in your way in shooting. Rely upon it, that the arm is

not steady enough when fatigued, and there are times when the gun is dropped at every discharge under these circumstances, and no bird falls. I think this is your case at present. Try your right barrel instead of your left; shake your horn when you turn it over to fill the charge, so as rather to increase the quantity of powder, and put in a few less shot. Take the next bird steadily, shoot a little before him, and try not to stop your arm; but let your aim be complete, and your trigger pulled at the same instant; and do not think about a miss or two—there will be time enough to fill your bag before the evening.

*Dilator.* What can be your motive for recommending me these things?

*Amicus.* I have observed that your right barrel does not ball so much as the left; I mean that it spreads its shot more. I am desirous to increase this by putting a little more powder behind fewer shot. As I have before observed, you are less likely to drop

your gun when shooting with the arm extended to the most forward trigger; and if you kill the next two or three shots, your confidence will be restored, and you will recover your shooting. But you say that you are fatigued with the heat of your jacket; how can it be otherwise, when you carry that strap across your shoulder, confining your jacket, and keeping out the air. Depend upon it, that for such shooting as we are now enjoying, a large flat belt round the waist is far preferable, but you are loaded with long skirts to your jacket also, large enough to carry three or four hares in; and nothing adds so much to fatigue, as any thing which encumbers.

*Dilator.* You are certainly right as to the inordinate length of my skirts; but I am in the habit of carrying what I kill when I shoot by myself, and I have in this instance overshot the mark. I like, however, experience upon all subjects. What is yours upon dress?

*Amicus.* There are some circumstances in which colour is of great consequence; for instance, stalking a deer, &c. In such a case, the dress should be of the same colour as the surrounding objects; mohair gambroom, of a bottle green, is an unremarkable colour. Indeed, for my own part, I conceive that colour is of some consequence in a dog, and that one with little or no white will get nearer the game without disturbing it, than one which is all white. I am inclined to think that we pay too little attention to these matters, and many other minutiae; for instance, the habits of animals lead them to remark moving objects, but they are seldom alarmed by those which are stationary, they do not indeed observe them. You may be satisfied of this by placing yourself where the wildest game usually haunt, and if it be in a spot unfrequented by men, not a ride *in* a wood but a bushy part *of* it, they will make their appearance all around without showing the slightest signs of fear or observation.

Of all animals, however, which may be approached, I know of none like a hare; for by moving slowly on while it is in the act of grazing, and becoming motionless when it lifts its ears, you may frequently walk within a dozen or twenty yards of it quite unperceived. For cover shooting, therefore, some care should be bestowed in the choice of colour; and it will not, indeed, be amiss to avoid strong contrasts with surrounding objects on all occasions, such as white hats, &c. As to material, fustian is lasting, strong, impenetrable, and fit enough for this place and this weather; but earlier in the season, I should have preferred jean for every thing but trowsers, and I think the laced boots you have on are very inconvenient; they are too heavy altogether, and too small. I think you will find a stout sole with a few nails in it, a strong upper-leather up to the ankle, and the laced part above that *pared away very thin*, with a broad point to the toe, the most pleasant; and if in the inside of these you wear a very

*thick worsted sock*, instead of a long stocking, you will be much more at liberty.—You have missed that shot, and I cannot help thinking——

*Dilator.* You are going to say that I had not an aim on any particular bird. This is true; the fact is, that I had no bird at the end of my gun, but the covey was so close, that I expected to kill two or three.

*Amicus.* Exactly; and therefore hit none. Give me leave to tell you, that shot was both unsportsmanlike and injudicious: the first, because you *might* have wounded several birds; the second, because the centre shot (which are those which kill) cover so small a surface, that it was extremely unlikely you should have killed even one.

*Dilator.* I am content to copy my fugleman of the day. How many birds did you kill this morning in the rough ground? unless my memory fails me, four fell to the first barrel and two to the second.

*Amicus.* I plead guilty to the charge;



but I blame you not only for the perpetration of the wish, but the failure of its execution, on which point let me call to your mind that I crossed the dog's head at right angles, and fired in that direction on purpose; that the birds fell in consequence not to my right and left, but in a direct line one beyond the other. The second shot was at crossing birds—an admissible shot at all times. To the first I must plead, in abatement, that I have promised to take up six brace to a friend, and endeavoured to confuse the covey to save my credit, and, like many as shortsighted as myself, have defeated my credit in one quarter, to support it in another. But here is your friend and his pupil. What have you found?

*Peritus.* We have had fine sport, and it might have been better but for Agilis's lively companion here, who is such a high ranger, that he put poor old Scrap out of countenance; to say nothing of an evil design he appears to entertain against the first hare he can get near.

*Agilis.* I am excessively unfortunate. I was offered the loan of an old dog, who, though good, would do but half a day, and this who I was assured would never knock up; and you must say he has sustained his character, though not quite steady.

*Peritus.* Indeed he has more than satisfied my wishes upon that head; and if you take the trouble to count the contents of our bag, you will find that but one bird has been killed to him all day. But you are right, at your time of life, to prefer him, as it would be more fatiguing to you to walk home with a tired dog, and comparatively full bag, at two, and beat the fields, cheerless and alone, without a dog afterwards, (though you had sport in the morning,) than to lose covey after covey, and live upon the hopes of your dog mending his manners before night. But *Amicus* can give us a hint or two about dogs, if he will.

*Amicus.* Indeed I have not possessed many good ones to help my recollection. Most

have had some serious faults ; but I have determined never again to keep any that had the following incorrigibly—*i.e.* coming to heel before being thoroughly knocked up ; refusing to drop shot ; tearing the game ; wanting in nose ; deficient of judgment in looking for game. Many others may be instanced, but they may partly be made up for—*i. e.* quartering ill by a good nose, unsteadiness behind by great range, a good nose, and much bottom, rendering another dog less necessary, &c. &c. But there is as much difference in animals as in men. I have seen a brace of dogs enter the field together, one of which appeared to have every advantage, finding the birds at a longer distance, possessing more bottom, more speed, and equal beauty, and at the same time a tolerable degree of steadiness, and never a moment idle ; but it did not possess the judgment of the other, and though no one could tell the reason why, it did not find a sixth part as often. Now, to me it seems quite evident, that this arose from

a want of early education, inasmuch as I have seen a dog much praised in England taken upon the moors, and exhibiting the same ignorance, though with a capital nose, and doing nothing for the first few days. I have, however, few opportunities of rearing dogs myself, and I in general take care to let it be known that I want a first-rate animal, and will pay his worth *on trial*; and prefer giving twelve or fifteen guineas for a superior creature, to laying out eight or ten, subject to disappointment. As to breaking, however, I may observe that there is nothing equal to a cord for teaching to quarter; a quality very desirable, while moderate speed, continuance, a good nose, steadiness before and behind, dropping shot, finding a dead bird, and cleanness of constitution, make up a dog somewhat more valuable than either of our parties have with us to-day;—however, never forgiving a fault, yet abstaining utterly from cruelty, continued attention, and good shooting, are great things; and perhaps our

squirrel-like companion may grow in value under Agilis's tuition ; for I see by the dog's condition he is well groomed, and a sufficiency of air in the kennel, clean water, and dry straw in plenty, will do wonders.

*Agilis.* What is your opinion as to feeding dogs ?

*Amicus.* There is a great diversity of opinion upon that subject. I think once a day sufficient, and the quantity and quality of that once should be regulated by the work the animal has to do ; not that a dog will not get fat upon less, if fed oftener, for he certainly will ; but there is no fear of an animal's not thriving nor keeping in condition if he be supplied but once, if that once is properly attended to. In the first place, he should be fed from a *clean* trough or a plate ; his food should never be given him raw, which will produce mange sooner than any other cause ; ship-biscuit, potatoes, baker's raspings, the refuse of the table, &c. are all proper food ; and dogs bred up in the north will do tole-

rably well upon oatmeal and milk; this, however, is very apt to reduce the condition of southern bred dogs, where the work is trying, and no animal food added, which should always be given in hard exercise. And if a dog be not suffered to decline in condition, for want of proper nourishment, nor be hunted till he is quite beaten, he will finish his season as well as he began it. Keepers, however, rarely attend to this, and hence the miserable condition we sometimes see animals in after work, being weary, footsore, and starved. Whereas, if the moment an animal comes in from the field, his feet be well washed with salt and water, a comfortable bed of clean straw made for him, and a *hot* supper given him directly, (for if much fatigued he will not eat a cold one at all, nor hot if he once gets well coiled up in his bed,) he will come out in the morning refreshed and lively, gaining in condition instead of falling off. Where animal food is not easy to be had, the refuse of the tallow-chandler's, called graves, are

extremely useful; they will carry and keep, contain much nourishment, are reasonable in price, and in long residences on the moors in Scotland cannot be done without; they are moreover so conveniently at hand, that your dogs are sure to get their proper allowance. I have only one thing to add, which is, that every place where a dog is kept, or a *puppy reared*, should be as airy and dry as possible, the stage upon which he sleeps a little lifted from the ground, the litter upon it frequently changed, never put in soiled, and be *entirely free from damp*. The effect of this will be plainly visible in a clean coat, loose skin, and absence of all cutaneous disorder. Nothing tends much more to produce mange and distemper, and to render these diseases difficult to cure, than damp; and I remember living for some time abroad, where I vainly endeavoured to rear nearly forty puppies without one single instance of success, until a stage was erected, upon which the animals always leaped when inclined to lie down

--the effect was immediate. But while we are talking the men have begun to beat the cover. You have ordered your dogs to be taken home, I conclude, to prevent their standing about after the work of the morning. Let us place ourselves. Suppose, Dilator, you stand just between these little woods; there are a great many meuses, and you are well below the wind. I think if you remain silent, you must be well placed; and remember, that you will see the most when the beaters are at some distance from you. We will place Agilis at the end of this long strip of salallows and grass. The pheasants always run to the end of a cover before they go away, unless much pressed; and if only men are used for beaters, the best sport is always at the end. Let me recommend you to stand out of sight; for I may say, that of all animals I know, there is none that surpasses a pheasant in quickness. Their eye is surprising, and if you watch the edge of a gorse cover in perfect silence, you will be surprised at



seeing the number of them which perceive you, and running back, never appear to be found afterwards. Peritus and I will take up our quarters in any open places we can find in the middle of the wood, under some large tree, where we shall have better chances for a cock.

*Peritus.* Well, gentlemen, the pheasants, I find, are not at home ; and I now remember that the buck-wheat stack in the wood appeared to be recently consumed. Our friend could not have done us a kinder act than to have discontinued feeding a day before we came. See, yonder is a large stubble ; the hedges about it are thick, and there are high turnips between this and the wood. Believe me, gentlemen, choosing proper places to look for game, and never leaving the sport in hand for the expectation of better in reversion, are great secrets. Come, let us beat the turnips, beginning near the cover, and cut off all retreat from whatever has left the wood. One dog for each party will do, and I think Amicus's may be relied on ; and, as old Pero knows me, I must put in a petition for him.

*Agilis.* We have now missed, but——

*Peritus.* I beg your pardon, but what you are now about, if it is your general practice, is unsportsmanlike. Ten weeks hence, it will not matter whether you have had ten shots or one hundred; and taking notice of every time you miss will diminish your steadiness, and induce you to refuse snap shots. Excepting in pigeon shooting, that most cockney and, in my opinion, unmanly amusement, missing is any thing but a correct criterion of bad shooting; and whenever you hear of a man's going out and missing nothing, especially late in the season, be sure that his vanity has had the upper hand of his amusement, and induced him to refuse some of the very shots which he should have most preferred; namely, difficult in position, or cramped in time. Ardent as I am in pursuit, I am at a loss to defend the sport when brought to an argument; but if you take away the little difficulties and hardships attached to it, the pleasure and the argument fall together

*Amicus.* I think our sport has been very satisfactory, evenly spread throughout the day. I confess I was not sorry we found little in the wood. I dislike anything approaching to a battue, it requires no science and little dexterity; but let us lay out our game, (unless you wish to *seal* the heads and send any away to-night,) and place it so as not to detain us in starting in the morning; and yet get quite cool during the night. And as we are to pack up our guns and portmantaus before going to bed, we can be away without depending upon any one's punctuality but the ostler's.

## CHAPTER V.

*Peritus.* I heard you express a wish the other day to visit the muirs ; have you made up your mind upon the subject ?

*Agilis.* Indeed I have ; but there are so many difficulties in the way of my starting, that I fear I can hardly have time to prepare before the 12th. I am at liberty, however, for some time, and can make up at the end what I lose at the beginning. Dilator would like to be of the party ; but I doubt his putting up with the inconvenience he is likely to meet with : however he has offered, and we must take him at his word. I should

like, however, to be as little burthened as possible; perhaps you will equip me.

*Peritus.* It is rather a delicate matter to fit out a friend; but I shall give you my thoughts upon the subject, and you can act for yourself. In the first place, for a dress I can recommend nothing better than a shepherd's tartan, which being woollen, does not cling when wet; or you may use a gambroom jacket, with waistcoat and trowsers of tartan, a waterproof cap instead of a hat, and gun-cover waterproof also, which may be had of M'Intosh, Charing Cross, and stout shoes made of single leather, with but one seam, and that behind; these are made as well in the country we are going to as any where. You have now nothing new to procure, but a waterproof cape, an article the use of which you will discover one day out of three at least; a few pair of doe-skin gloves, buttoning at the wrist, and a black stock or two. Wicker panniers to carry game on horse-back, you may procure on the road; these

should be covered with oil-skin, and may be found at any saddler's in Edinburgh. I should recommend, as to dogs, that you write to some of your northern friends to say that you want two brace of the best to be procured, or if very anxious to prevent disappointment, two and a half; these you will of course either try or have tried for you before purchase, under which circumstances I should take setters or pointers as they offered, as all northern dogs hunt so much better than those from the south. If you are under the necessity of carrying dogs with you, from knowing no one in the north, and passing quickly through it, then I should recommend nothing but setters, or you will probably find yourself extremely disappointed, and all your best pointers at heel half the day. I should prefer a long carrying gun, that spread less than might be desirable for general purposes in England. Fourteen or fifteen is perhaps a good bore, the weight from seven pounds three-quarters to eight pounds; and as acci-

dents are numerous, if you have a spare one, you may find great help from it ; but do not take any gun that is unwieldy in your hands ; you will otherwise lose in time what you gain in distance, and carry weight for nothing : spare shot-belt and powder horn, a pair of spurs, and a gun-sling. I think I have now, in addition to your usual supply, mentioned all I would load you with ; and as we are to find our way by different routes, I will only caution you to see your baggage packed and started yourself, and bid you good bye, till we meet on the muirs.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Peritus.* I have, I see, a most apt pupil—your appointments are perfect ; but where is Dilator ? We were to be off at seven, and it is now a quarter past.

*Agilis.* He will be down in an instant, and while he is at breakfast, the dogs may be getting to the ground.

*Peritus.* I have taken the liberty of a master to dispose of our paraphernalia ; the dogs and guns have been gone on this hour, and we are to be on the ground at a quarter before eight. Your friend's dogs and gun will have gone on still further, and he will



miss them altogether if we do not detain them. You must leave word for him to hasten after us : I fear that he will have to hunt down the half hour he has lost—the best part of the day ; but let me look at your pannier : no spare powder ?

*Agilis.* My flask is quite full.

*Peritus.* Never lose a chance ; put in this half pound, quite little enough. And now if we meet a roe in our rambles, for I am told there are many about, what do you propose firing at him with ?

*Agilis.* The chance is so slight, that I hardly think it worth while to make any preparation.

*Peritus.* Or, in other words, you are too idle to take the trouble. Here are four charges of B B, in my opinion the only shot for roe deer ; I say shot, for although they will kill at fifty yards with a broadside, yet at any greater distance a rifle only can be depended upon: it is true, you may use larger shot, but you must remember that the more you increase in size,

the greater the vacuum between them as they lie in the barrel, and consequently they are not so much impelled by direct tergal pressure ; but the shot behind acting upon their sides, on the principle of an inclined plane, forces them to cannon much more, and go wider of the mark ; but come, on with your spur, these ponies are in general obstinacy itself without.—If I mistake not, you are shooting grouse with No. 4.

*Agilis.* I was told that so large a bird required large shot.

*Peritus.* No doubt there is greater difficulty in reaching a vital part through a large opposing substance than a small one ; but you must remember that at this season, the whole plumage of birds is not yet grown, the muscles and sinews are not yet so strong and firm as they will be ; and the flight of all birds is slower than in winter ; on such account I would use much smaller shot now than later in the season ; and indeed you will find sevens now as efficient as fours will be in

two months time. You must remember, that to bring down a bird you must either strike it in a vital part, or impede its flight, and the fewer the shots that strike, the less likely you are to attain that object. I once fired a small bullet through a black cock, and he flew so far that he was only found by accident afterwards. But I will repeat to you my ideas as to the sizes of shot best calculated both for England and Scotland, as we are upon the subject:—

*Partridge, hare.*—From September 1, to October 1, No. 7.

*Partridge, hare, woodcock, rabbit, pheasant.*—From October 1, to the end of the season, No. 6.

*Ducks.*—No. 5, or 4.

*Roe deer.*—B B at all times.

*Grouse.*—From August 12 to September 1, No. 7; from September 1 to September 25, No. 6; from September 25 to the end of the season, No. 5.

*Black game.*—From August 20 to Sep-

tember 1, No. 7; from September 1 to September 10, No. 6; from September 1 to October 10, No. 5; from October 10 to the end of the season, No. 4 or 5, as the gun may shoot close or scatter; if it scatter, the smaller shot of the two.

—But how, are all your caps gone?

*Agilis.* Why, the truth is, I leant down to tie my shoe just now, and rather carelessly dropt a great many; I have now not one.

*Peritus.* I find it convenient always to have a small leathern bag, containing one or two hundred, and this occupies an undisturbed corner of my shooting-jacket; I then always take out what I think enough loose in my pocket, and when I feel short, I apply to my hoard; here it is for you, bag and all: I find I have plenty. But come, we have already beaten this side of the hill too much; I think we are rather wasting the strength of the dogs. The wind is rather keen, and if we try the low grounds and peat mosses, perhaps we shall fall in with them. See, we have a point

already: be sure you pick out an old bird if possible, it will carry better, and our sport will last longer in the season, as the young ones will not so soon get shy without leaders; these are indeed small birds.

*Agilis.* Singular enough; my first bird fell dead, and yet the dog seems to take little notice of the place, but draws on at a distance: he is under your command, will you set him to look for it? this is the spot where it fell.

*Peritus.* The bird you dropped fell too heavy to be killed; if it had been, it would either have fallen more lightly, or upon its back; and the dog you think is not doing his duty, is now roding your bird—it was only winged,

*Agilis.* I think it impossible the bird I fired at could have got so far off so soon: the dog is probably running heel. You see he has brought up quite steadily, and there is nothing near him.

*Peritus.* Put your hand up that dark peat-

looking hole, that looks like a little water-course—further—have you got it ?

*Agilis.* I have ; but it does not follow that it is mine.

*Peritus.* Look at the wing and be satisfied. But let us wend our way home. We have had fair sport, and our bag will bear looking at.

*Agilis.* Hist ! hist ! there are two deer : this is an open hill. Call to the dogs and let them be tied up. The deer will surely allow us to get behind that projection, and close upon them.

*Peritus.* Do not be too sure of that ; however, we will try. Turn this way back, the dogs will follow, and we shall have an immediate opportunity of tying them up, as they pass near us. Otherwise, the deer, which are twice as sensitive of hearing as the dogs, and are much more ready to be alarmed than the dogs are to be obedient, will make off. Now I have them. Duncan, keep the dogs behind this rock, so that we may be out of their sight

in an instant : take your whip, and see they do not whine. See, see! the dog is not half secure. Now let us creep down ; if the roes make any where, it must be over here between the hills. Walk straight forward and gently. Let us take another turn. Singular enough ! I think we have yet a chance at the bottom of the hill. We may never have such another opportunity. One I saw was a fine buck We must beat this well. I see a few clumps of tall heather below : most probably they are in it.

*Agilis.* I am fairly disappointed. I thought to have had a shot, but they are gone. A roe would never lie in the open, here ; I have got a grouse, however, for my pains. He must fall—one would have thought such large shot would have killed it in an instant. Now he is down.

*Peritus.* I see he is ; and if you look in the direction which I spoke of, you will see some other game which we will now take leave of for the day, for you see they are topping the hill.

*Agilis.* How extremely provoking! Could I have fancied for a moment the deer would lie in the open, especially after having seen us, I should not have dreamt of firing at the grouse. Did they come out of the heather?

*Peritus.* I conceive they came from the spot I pointed out; but I caught sight of them when running, and know not exactly where they came from. Deer have a strange faculty of slinking away unseen, for such large creatures. However, we have enough—let us move homewards.



## CHAPTER VII.

*Peritus.* What sport have you had?

*Dilator.* I think I should have done well, but unluckily I mislaid the key of my gun-case, and when I found it, the powder-horn, owing to the forgetfulness of my servant, was not in it; and I had to go to the bottom of a portmanteau for it. The consequence was, that when I got to the ford you mention, my men and dogs were gone forward, and I lost at least an hour in finding my way. Thus I did not get into my shooting till late, and I was obliged to leave the ground at the very moment of my best sport, and barring ten minutes

or a quarter of an hour, which I certainly might have saved by getting up earlier, all this is owing to the stupidity of my servant.

*Peritus.* There are some subjects not quite fitted for a scientific argument, and I think this is one; but still I cannot help observing that, in the first place, as a sportsman, your apparatus should be in your own keeping; and secondly, that if the said quarter of an hour had been employed in keeping your time, we should, in all probability, have all three reached your man and dogs before he had passed the ford. We tried to stop them; but having waited a little too long for you, were too late. I wish, however, you may always buy experience so cheap—but let us look at your panniers. Why these are fine birds indeed! You must have been on high land.

*Dilator.* I was indeed; for finding nothing but squeakers, or I believe cheepers, as they are called here, and knowing they were not fit to carry, I left the low lands and went up

higher; for, to tell you the truth, it is not quantity I desire, but quality, and I would rather kill half-a-dozen birds fit for examination, than double the quantity of young ones.

*Peritus.* I quite agree with you; and you will find all the advantage from killing the old birds, which you cannot distinguish later. But let us show the good folks how we wish the birds managed in the morning. In the first place, nothing is so common as to change game on the road; we will therefore, troublesome as it is, have their heads sealed; secondly, we will put out all the birds we wish packed, with the direction on paper lying over each parcel, which must be kept separate; and when packed, the paper, stating the sender's name, date when killed and sent, &c., shall be put in the inside, and a copy of this written on the box; and, as I have desired all the game we send to pass through the hands of an intelligent person at Edinburgh, we may hope it will arrive safe.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Agilis.* What a pleasant companion Dila-tor would be, if he were but fair enough to consider his friends' time as his own property, and not invade it so often. I have been waiting for him half-an-hour, and when he comes, he will first miss half his tackle, then fill his shot-belt, and, after all, probably propose a visit to the dog-kennel or elsewhere, though he sees every one waiting for him. This sort of thing so completely fidgets me, that I cannot shoot and gallop after the lost hour, all day.

*Peritus.* You are almost as much too

anxious as Dilator is too slow ; for it must be remembered, and no easy matter is it to do so, that shooting is not an employment but an amusement, and if you follow it as the former, you put it out of its place.

*Agilis.* I accord the matter, and perhaps I could manage to lay by my wishes to go out, and employ myself otherwise until a given time; but my annoyance is, that fix what time you will, Dilator always kills my sport by appearing totally unanxious to engage in it, and he always loads his gun as if he were going to take an observation.

*Peritus.* Well, it must be confessed he is a little hard upon you. But see, the dogs are roding: here are some of our black friends, judging by the manner of the dogs and the wet rushes that are near. Is it not singular that the same bird which, when young, will let you kick it up, is the wildest of the wild as the autumn approaches?—Well killed—this is an old bird of two or three seasons, though his tail is not spread. Now let us

make an attempt for some ptarmigan. I am desirous to cool your ardour for them. We will make for the top of one of the highest hills hereabout. Look at these broken stones—the birds sit there in general, and are hardly perceptible from their similarity of colour. You may pass them many times without being aware of it. Let us hunt the soft moss upon this bare and bleak-looking hill. Now see, the dogs are quite desponding, and never having found game in such a place, barely hunt. Are you satisfied?

*Agilis.* Indeed I am! Let us return.

*Peritus.* No; we cannot go back without finding one covey. Let us try that cairn, and place our men so, that if we do find any, they may mark them. Look, our attendant to the left is making signs, they are wild as hawks. They are up—we shall find them with difficulty. Up again!

*Agilis.* Did I do right to fire?

*Peritus.* Perfectly; you might have killed—and you have, too! See, the bird you

shot is falling at the turn of the hill, and a *leading* bird too! Now we shall get them—let us make the most of the covey.

*Agilis.* I think I counted six brace and a half; we have five brace, and two are gone out of bounds. I have a mind to have a brace of these preserved; how shall I carry them?

*Peritus.* Smooth their feathers, and lay them in your handkerchief, roll it up carefully, taking care there is no blood; now a little heather over and under, I think will do. Let us send our men home, and spend the end of this lovely day by ourselves. I confess I feel a sort of annoyance at travelling all day with a servant behind; and I cannot help looking back with some pleasure to those times, when all my little arrangements were begun and completed without assistance. The dogs seemed more under my own controul when let out of the kennel by their master, and each partridge, as it went into the pocket, had an individual value—(here, with the quan-

tity we bring home, we cannot be so independent,)—and this, I think, gives a great zest to those days when we start late after rain, and can only try for an old black cock, or endeavour to get within distance of a buck. On these occasions (when folly cannot hope for a plentiful day, in the attempt at which we sometimes sacrifice our amusement) how delightful is it to make the gun but a sort of excuse for our wandering, and, seated upon one of the rocks in the wildest spot to be found, ponder over auld lang syne ; the company we are in, the weather, the wildness of the scene, can make a moderate bag all that we desire. But we are now near home ; we will try this little moss for a snipe, and give up. Not a bird. Fire off or unload your gun ; and let me recommend you, for habit sake, never to take it home charged ; or if you do, (and it only should be when clean or *very* nearly so, and to be used the next morning,) take it to pieces on the spot and put it in your case, or any where under lock and key,



and do not, as many do, draw the shot and leave the powder, as if it could do no mischief alone, even if not one shot remained behind. But remember—safe bind, safe fire. I shall wish you good-bye to-night, and when I return, which will not be until the winter approaches, we will endeavour to get an old black cock or two in the wood, which shall be worth a dozen of those to be had at the hill side at present. I have mentioned the sizes of shot, and I think, with the steady dogs and large range you have, provided you do not overdo the first, nor beat part of the latter too often, but go closely over such ground as you find birds in, that when I meet you again you will give good account; and we shall be able to talk over what has yet been unsaid, as well as to enjoy a winter campaign, which I promise you is a very different thing to summer work, and requires more than double the quickness and labour for less than half the produce. Adieu !

## CHAPTER IX.

*Agilis.* I am delighted to see you ; but I fear the sport is over. We have had rain upon rain, the birds are wild as hawks ; we find few, and, to confess the truth, I can hardly be satisfied with our present returns.

*Peritus.* I can easily believe it ; but I discovered signs and appearances of frost to-night, and if so, you will find the birds again begin to lie. But I must hear how you have sped, and to-morrow we will begin the last week of our remaining here ; during which time, as to-day is the first of November, I hope we shall have one glimpse of the mountains tipped with snow.

*Agilis.* You left us, you remember, in very bad weather, which I am told must be expected so far to the west, (though in Aberdeenshire I understand they have had little rain.) The birds were wild, and indeed every body shooting around us having left the country, we found we were doing little more than frightening the birds off the ground when we went out; and as they were not driven back, they have continued to get scarce, excepting now and then, in places little frequented before. We have had fair sport in the peat mosses, for instance, and low muirs, which were never worth beating until late in the season, the hollows between the hills, &c. But, on the whole, we have had little sport enough; and our chief inducement to stay has been in the hope that your return would improve our larder.

*Peritus.* I must indeed do my best under such circumstances. Let us therefore arrange our plans immediately, and either try for deer and black game, or send off the dogs

before us, that we may start early and have time to change our ground, if we do not find birds where we expect them.

*Agilis.* I shall be up early, and will undertake to follow your directions, when we see what sort of a day it is. Good night!

## CHAPTER X.

*Agilis.* The light is so strong to what I have been used to for the last week, that I thought it had been later; but I find, to my consternation, that it is caused by the glow from the snow which has fallen thick in the night; and our sport is therefore prevented. The frost is hard, and I see little expectation of it breaking up. What are we to do?

*Peritus.* You were anxious to get a brace of black game to furnish a glass case; and as they are only now in possession of their full plumage, (and hardly that,) you can have

had no opportunity of procuring them so well before. What think you of our endeavours to find a brace fit for your purpose ?

*Agilis.* Dilator and myself have tried in vain since you went away, to accomplish this. We have taken only the steadiest dogs and best roders, but I assure you the cocks are so wild there is not a chance. They have begun to pack.

*Peritus.* Well we will try, I think. Dilator, one of the barrels of your gun is a singularly close carrier, almost to a fault. Suppose, then, you load with fours; *Agilis*, and I will be content with a size less. We must not stand upon ceremony, as we are to have a brace for specimens. Duncan, take the dogs, and wait for us in that little cottage; and do you, *Agilis*, place yourself by the side of the largest of these fir trees as silently as possible; the birds will pass by you, and you will probably get a shot at the old bird you desire; and remember, above all things, that if a cock rises on your way, hardly let him clear

the ground before you fire. They barely rise within distance late in the season, and the least loss of time is a fatal mistake. Dilator and I will walk between the fir trees carefully, silently and slowly, and perhaps we shall get a shot.

*Dilator.* These creatures are like wood-pigeons; they go out on the opposite side of the tree, and though I have fired half-a-dozen shots, not a bird have I killed.

*Peritus.* This you must expect. Black game at this season will receive a severe blow before it falls. Let me remind you, that to get any animal, you must either strike it in a vital part or interfere with its power of motion. The proof that at long shots many birds are struck and not caught, lies in this; viz. that the majority bagged at long ranges have broken wings; not that the arm which carries the feathers is more obnoxious to the shot than other parts, for the bones of the two wings, compared with the whole body, do not occupy half the space—say rather one-

third. One-third, therefore, only of the birds so killed should have their wings broken; but the proportion is much greater. We want, therefore, shot of such a size, that, when the bird is struck, shall have force enough to penetrate to a vital part, yet not fly so thin as for only one or two shot to strike. This throws a great advantage in favour of a close-carrying barrel when large shot are used, (the reason of which close shooting I am unable to explain,) and also of a large bore, which latter is obvious; but perhaps it will be more so to you, if you put twenty shot into a small quill. You see that they now lie not upon each other in a tolerably solid body, each upon each; but that the vacuum is great, the pressure, as I before observed, is not central, and the tendency is to diverge. On the contrary, in this swan-quill they lie more evenly, and more will therefore go straight to the mark. But stop, do you go nearer the centre of the wood; I will keep a little at the side, by which means



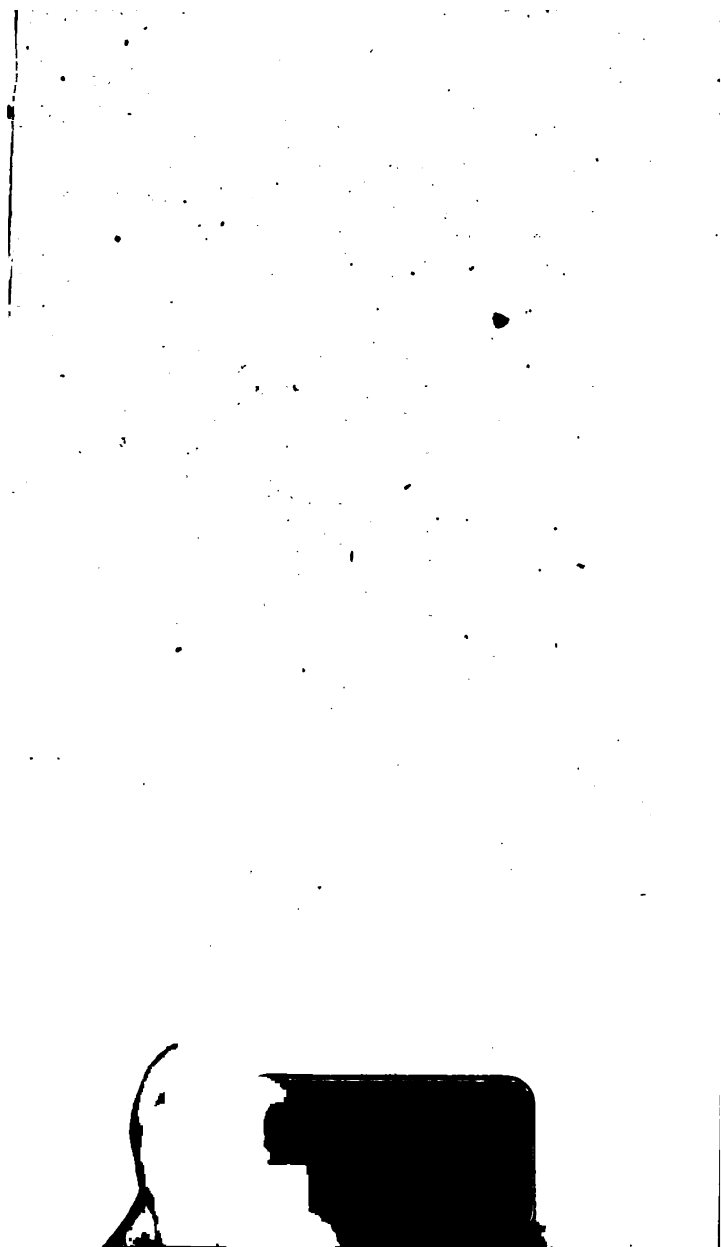
perhaps I shall get a side shot, a better chance of killing. We are to shoot at every thing to-day.—See, I have a hen, and a fine specimen it is. Let us tie a string through the tongue, smooth its feathers, and fix it to this tree: we cannot miss it. And now let us change ground. I think I have hitherto had the best chance.

*Dilator.* I find the old cocks will hardly let us even see them; but I think Agilis must get a shot. Had we not better cease talking: I have lost two chances already, by my voice.—Well, I believe it is all over. What have you done, Agilis?

*Agilis.* Very little; but one bird, and that a hen; but I saw numbers. Shall we not now follow the grouse? we have only to cross the stream.

*Dilator.* I fear the snow is coming thick, and the wind is too high. We have little chance of grouse; let us beat round for more black game; we may drive some back, and get a shot or two on our return.

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*Peritus.* Hush! hush! look at Duncan. Depend upon it, he would not beckon were the chance worthless. Do not go up the rise, you will alarm that which he sees, whatever it may be. Let us round this little knoll. Now I see him: look at that magnificent old cock—how wary he is! Observe his neck, stretched to its utmost limits. We have not a chance with him; were the snow not on the ground for the first time, he would long ago have been away at the first sound of the guns. It may, however, be worth a trial. Remain here; Agilis and I will try to get round him. I see, however, from his manner, that the first alarm will send him miles over the distant rock, after the large covey that we saw in the hollow. This way—he sees me; wait but for a moment. We must drop down the shelving bank; I can then pass round, and if he does not allow me to near him, you have a chance as he crosses the ravine; for if he has not seen us, assuredly he will make for the firs. But see, that vile

hawk has put him up ; here he comes straight in a line towards us—but what a height ! Drop, Agilis, a little, and be steadily immoveable till he gets over you ; if you point your gun now, you will turn him.—So went the only chance you have for your museum. I heard your shot patter upon his wings, barrel after barrel, but in vain. He is struck, and hard ; but to a certainty you lose him, and ten to one but he recovers entirely.

*Agilis.* See ! see ! down he comes, right in the centre of the ravine ; but alas ! the snow is so deep, the descent so rocky and perpendicular, and so impossible was it to mark him where he fell amongst the rank heather, I fear we have little chance ; the line was between Duncan and the broken fir ; I hardly think he reached the burn.

*Peritus.* Try the bitch ; her powers of retrieving are extraordinary ; nor did I know the value of a dog who looked well for dead birds till I had her. See, there she is straight as

a line to the bird at once. I have him: a magnificent cock of at least three years, in splendid winter plumage. A shot in the breast, which I supposed killed him, one through both legs, and another in the neck; proof enough that we have not missed so often to-day as we seemed to do. I quite regret the certainty of having hit so many. Let us now beat the wood again: we shall be better used to it. What a picture this is! take it and the hen, Duncan, and leave them hung up in the cottage; we will carry them home carefully. Try for cross shots, and be not so anxious. You are thinking you miss when you do not. Will you try a half-pound of new unopened powder? you will find it a matter of economy frequently to throw away that which you have any doubt of; when you consider the expense of the rest of your necessities, and the value of time, this would make but a small item. Now let me again remind you, that when birds are wild, the great thing is to be always ready, and fire

before they are well on the wing ; the position is more favourable for you, as you have more of the bird to shoot at ; he meets the force of the shot better than when going fast the same way, and his plumage is more abroad, and the muscles not so strongly knit, or so likely to turn off the shot.—Well, what think you ? five brace of black game and a leash of grouse. This I think is better sport than ten times the quantity of poor birds. But let us go home, it is getting late.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Agilis.* Peritus is about to shoot near home. He has letters to write which will detain him. Let us look for grouse in the low ground at the edge of the hill, where there is little or no snow. I find the ground which was the best at the beginning of the season is sometimes the worst now, and *vice versa*. This is singular. How well the birds lie, as if it were the beginning of the season ; but their flight is like an arrow. See, there are a brace. Ah ! mine is up again. How I regret it required the second barrel, and yours the same ; neither are now fit to be



stuffed. I thought when they rose they were black game. I am told that these birds are excessively old; they are nearly black, and I should think the weight of the two must be more than three pounds. We have now had twenty-one shots and not a miss, except that little Jack snipe, which may fairly be said to have got through these large shot twice—there, he is down! I am content; five brace and a half at this season, and such birds, are ample. I had no idea that game would lie in such a manner in the snow. I see we have not yet outstayed all our sport. To-morrow, if we do not get any deer, we shall at least find out where they have out-generalled us.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Peritus.* Agilis, will you place yourself quite silently in the wood? I think the deer are sure to pass by in the sheep-walks, and you will have a good chance; you know we have no rifle, and are to get a buck, if possible, before we go.

*Agilis.* I would rather take my chance in a line; waiting is tedious.

*Peritus.* It is so, and therefore I am glad you prefer walking with us; but we must not speak a word, or all hope of a buck, at all events, will be lost. Indeed I am not clear that the best chance is not to walk alone

carefully through and through the wood, with a ready hand and a watchful eye. With a rifle this is unquestionably the case, when many shot may be had at one hundred or one hundred and fifty yards, as you will see the bucks standing; and so quick is the ear, so ready the eye, that in general when you first observe them, it is with their full front towards you, watching your movements, or at any rate listening that way;—under these circumstances, stalking them with shot is very likely to be unsuccessful, though you may get within wounding distance, and are tempted to fire in vain as they gallop away. But come, let us move on; a beater between each, if we may call them beaters, whose only office it is to walk in perfect silence without a stick; but see! see! the bitch draws; up to her in an instant. See how cautious she is! get on to those two heathy knobs, and command around you. 'Tis too late;—look! here are the marks; and see the poor bitch, how little she seemed to know where it was: here was its

lair. You must press forward, the next point you have of this nature. You will probably have three or four without a shot; and when you do see a deer, it will probably, under such circumstances, be either a doe or a fawn, or perhaps both.

*Agilis.* There, she is a fair broadside! but alas! no horns.

*Dilator.* I have pricked off several; what say you, shall we beat here for black game? I have refused many shot for deer, and have lost my chance, I fear. I am disposed to think, however, that we often suppose an animal to be within shot, on account of its size, when it is not. I am certain that I have fired at many black cocks that have been one hundred yards off, under this impression.

*Peritus.* If we are to beat for black game, we may let loose another dog; for deer, one is too many: but I will walk round the end of the wood through the thick heather. I think we are unlikely to find more deer, and shall charge with No. 5.

*Agilis.* I have him—a noble buck; the very fellow I have seen so often. What a singular chance! my gun loaded with small shot. I heard you fire, and thinking as it was my last chance I would not lose it, took that opportunity of drawing the charge, and putting in the only remaining load of B B; I was however, so long in loading, that you had got a-head, and I had not proceeded ten steps, before in the thick heather up got the buck. The distance was far enough, and you were, I knew, some where in front; and indeed the heather was so high, that having only a chance at his quarters, I refused it: he endeavoured to get off before me, but I suppose saw you, and turning round, rose high up for an instant to see his way, and would, I suppose, in a moment have dashed off in a gallop between us;—at that instant he fell: the distance, I think, was not more than forty-five yards.

*Peritus.* I confess to have been as much surprised, though happily not so much hurt

as the roe ; I could not conceive what shot you were shooting with, they flew by me in full force, and whistled close about me like bullets.

*Agilis.* This is some hint of the *danger* of ball-shooting, under such circumstances ; I could not see you, and thought the shot could not by possibil'y have reached. But we are in the open, and as we are to have no more shot at deer, let me have your opinion as to the manner in which they escape. I cannot conceive how they avoid us.

*Peritus.* As the season advances, you will always find less and less game in cover, every time you beat it, in proportion to what it contains ; the fact is, that the animals get into the habit of shifting their ground the first noise they hear, and instead, therefore, of seeing them when first disturbed, you are a march behind them throughout the day ; they have also found by which place of flight they are most secure of being unmolested, and they make to it at

once. Thus, I have seen in a cover which I knew held pheasants, not one to be found; not conceiving the cause, I disturbed two or three fir-trees, and found them full of birds; and in walking round outside the wood, several pheasants were sitting on the outside branches of the hedge which surrounded us, while the spaniels were beating below in vain. The deer do this, and may, if narrowly watched, be seen leaving the woods and taking to the open, where they will secrete themselves in the rankest heather they can find; but they are not approachable within the range of shot under such circumstances, and having been once disturbed remain shy for the day. But how now, *Agilis*? you are quite lost in an absent fit.

· *Agilis*. No great wonder surely, under such circumstances. This has been a day of the keenest enjoyment to me. Look at the distant hills how exquisitely white they are; the very air itself is clearer than usual; observe that dark cloud which seems at open warfare with the

clear and motionless white around, and appears about to overwhelm the huge mountain upon which it rests. How has the face of nature changed ! two days ago the rain fell in torrents ; the river swollen to the utmost limits of its bed, as if indignant at its forced confinement, rolled its huge and foaming masses of turbid water over the very summit of yon grey stone, which now, like a sleeping giant, spreads his broad length along, unconscious of the clear and stilly stream which wanders by as if it feared to rouse the slumbering monster. Let me but wander in a scene like this, under the mere pretence of shooting, and how joyfully would I give up the foggy vicinity of a November pheasant cover for the change. Surely the very difficulty of procuring game at this advanced season, when every bird is a watchful general, makes it doubly worth pursuit ; and I can draw no comparison between standing at a cover-side, to have the half-tamed game driven to the gun, without a loop-hole to escape ; and roaming at large over this



splendidly wild and rugged pass, knee-deep in snow, and trying, even if in vain, to circumvent an old black cock more wary than myself. How I regret that our amusement is so near a close ! We shall, however, have one more good day, if the frost hold and the snow remain, at the black game.

*Peritus.* I regret to disappoint you, but better here than in the field : the fresh snow appears to be a matter of wonder to the black game, and they avoid it and take to the fir-trees. To-morrow you might not have a single shot ; and indeed, I am almost glad to secure myself from the effects which I find upon my mind, after our sport ; the health it bestows, the vigour it imparts, the degree of hardening, making us insensible to weather, the wildness of the scenery, the difficulty of getting near the game, the recollection of olden time, and last, though not least, the company I am in,—all these have conspired to drive every other care from my mind for the time ; but we must remember, that which should

have been our pastime, has been our business, and I, the moralizer, have perhaps been the most carried away with it. Down she goes! a grey hen; the last and almost the longest shot we have made together. See, the snow falls in clouds, home we must go; the dogs are frozen. How we cling to that we like, when the thing itself—nay, even the capability of enjoying it, is no more! Many, many will be the recollections we shall experience of this our trip! Come, wetter you cannot be; staying for the boat is waste of time; the river is but half thigh deep; on the other side I shall discharge my gun, and bid adieu to the muirs, probably for ever! \* \* \* Farewell!

## THE END.

## ERRATA.

Page 10, line 5, *for* above *read* nearly.

11, — 5, *for* or *read* of.

33, — 10, *for* charges *read* chargers.

LONDON:

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.







